

**US 51/WIS 29  
North of the Big Rib River  
Mallard Lane to West Bridge Street  
Marathon County**

**Public Hearing**

**Tuesday, March 18, 2003**



Welcome to the Public Hearing on the Environmental Assessment that has been prepared for US 51/WIS 29 corridor from Mallard Lane to West Bridge Street located in Marathon County commonly referred to as the US 51/WIS 29 west interchange.

You are invited to view exhibits, ask questions and share your ideas and concerns with representatives of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Ayres Associates, and Strand Associates. There will be no formal presentations during this hearing.

Relevant oral testimony concerning the location, social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed improvement, as discussed in the Environmental Assessment (EA), may be given to the court reporter stationed in the exhibit area who will transcribe your comments for the official public hearing record. Written testimony may be deposited in a comment tray at the sign-in table or mailed to the DOT as explained on the next page.

Thank you for attending the Public Hearing,

*The Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
and the 51/29 Corridor Management Team (CMT)*

## HOW TO REGISTER COMMENTS FOR THE RECORD

If you wish to testify directly to the court reporter **verbally** during the open-forum hearing:

1. Please complete the form on the last page of this handout. Include:
  - Your name
  - Your address
  - List who you are representing (if applicable)
  - Your local unit of government
2. Proceed to the court reporter, provide the court reporter with the information you have filled out and present your statement.

If you wish to testify by **written** statement:

1. Write out your statement using the attached comment form. Additional blank paper is available at the sign-in table for your convenience.
2. Place the form in the comment tray provided, OR mail your statement using the prepaid envelopes available at the sign-in table. (If you represent an organization, please respond on the organization's letterhead.)

Note: All statements postmarked by April 17, 2003 will become part of the public hearing transcript.

## **Project background and proposed action**

The Wausau Metropolitan area is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. This rapid growth has lead to increasing congestion on the local freeways and roadways. Maintaining an efficient flow of traffic is essential to meeting the area's growing needs and for continued economic growth for communities located along the US 51/WIS 29 corridor.

To relieve the congestion, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), along with local units of government, are in the process of looking at solutions to the growing problems along the US 51/ WIS 29 corridor. A preliminary plan was developed and, in accordance with state and federal laws, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for those proposed improvements. WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved the EA in May 2001.

In the original EA, WisDOT outlines proposed improvements to US 51/ WIS 29 between Fox Glove Road and West Bridge Street. Improvements included the expansion of existing US 51/ WIS 29 from four-lanes to six-lanes and improving the service interchanges at Marathon County N, Marathon County NN, Sherman Street and West Bridge Street. It also outlines a proposal to reconfigure the system-to-system interchanges, both north and south, at WIS 29. Configurations for these proposed interchanges were included in the approved EA.

Since the original publication of the EA, WisDOT and the affected local communities determined the proposed configuration for the north US 51/WIS 29 interchange, though environmentally friendly, does not meet the transportation needs of the area. A Value Engineering/Value Planning team was assembled to study the area and to develop a new configuration for this interchange. The team consisted of representatives from WisDOT, local governments, local business owners and associations, government agencies, residents, and consulting engineers. Through a series of workshops, the team worked together to develop an alternative that met the needs identified for the area. Public meetings were also held during this process to get valuable input on identifying a preferred alternative.

When the Value Engineering process was completed a new interchange configuration was proposed. Because the new proposed interchange configuration is significantly different than the original proposal, and to conform to state and federal laws, a new EA has been prepared for the area between the Big Rib River and West Bridge Street. The area south of the Big Rib River was not affected by the proposed changes so the environmental impacts to the area south of the Big Rib River are still covered by the original EA. Because that document has been approved, the area south of the Big Rib River is closed to public comment at this hearing.

We are including an Environmental Cost Matrix (Figure 1) that compares the environmental impacts of the originally proposed interchange with those of the newly proposed interchange. The goal of the Environmental Assessment is to provide a balance between the need for a safe and efficient freeway system that maintains access to the community and the adverse impacts to existing businesses, residences and the environment. The newly proposed interchange provides a better balance between these factors than the previously proposed alternative.

State and federal officials preliminarily approved the new EA, which addresses the proposed changes north of the Big Rib River, in October 2002. Since that time it has been on display at several locations in the area so that the public can read and comment on the document. This hearing will conclude the public comment period on the document. After addressing the comments received at this hearing the EA will be submitted for final approval.

**FIGURE 1**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL COST MATRIX**

<b>Environmental Issue</b>	<b>Unit Measure</b>	<b>No Build</b>	<b>Original Proposal</b>	<b>New Proposal</b>
<b>Project Length</b>	Mi		3.3	3.3
<b>Cost \$</b>				
Construction	Million \$		\$83.9	\$82.9
Real Estate	Million \$		\$9.2	\$26.5
Total	Million \$		\$93.1	\$109.4
<b>Land Conversions</b>				
Total Area Converted to R/W	Acres		17.0	35.2
Wetland Area Converted to R/W	Acres		6.4	11.24
Upland Area Converted to R/W	Acres		10.6	19.4
Other Area Converted to R/W	Acres		N/A	4.56
<b>Real Estate</b>				
Number of Farms Affected	Number		0	0
Total Area From Farm Operations Required	Acres		0	0
AIS Required?	Yes/No		No	No
Farmland Rating	Score		N/A	N/A
Total Buildings Required	Number		9	7
Housing Units Required	Number		5	0
Commercial Units Required	Number		3	6
Other Buildings or Structures Required	Number (Type)		1 (San. Sewer Pump Station)	1 (San. Sewer Pump Station)
<b>Environmental Issues</b>				
Flood Plain	Yes/No		Yes	Yes
Stream Crossings	Number		2	2
Endangered Species	Yes/No		No	No
Historic Properties	Number		No	No
Archeological Sites	Number		No	No
106 MOA Required?	Yes/No		No	No
4(f) Evaluation Required?	Yes/No		No	No
Environ Justice At Issue?	Yes/No		No	No
Air Quality Permit?	Yes/No		No	No
Design Year Noise Sensitive Receptors				
No Impact	Number		42	78
Impacted	Number		114	24
Exceed dBA Levels	Number		114	24
Contaminated Sites	Number		4	8

## **Schedule**

The schedule for project activities after the public hearing is as follows:

April 17, 2003	End Comment Period
Spring/Summer	Finish review of comments, update Environmental Assessment (as necessary) and evaluate Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI)

## **Project Contacts**

For information about this proposed project, you may contact:

Doug Ross, Hwy 51/29 Corridor Manager  
WisDOT-District 4  
1681 Second Avenue South  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-4768

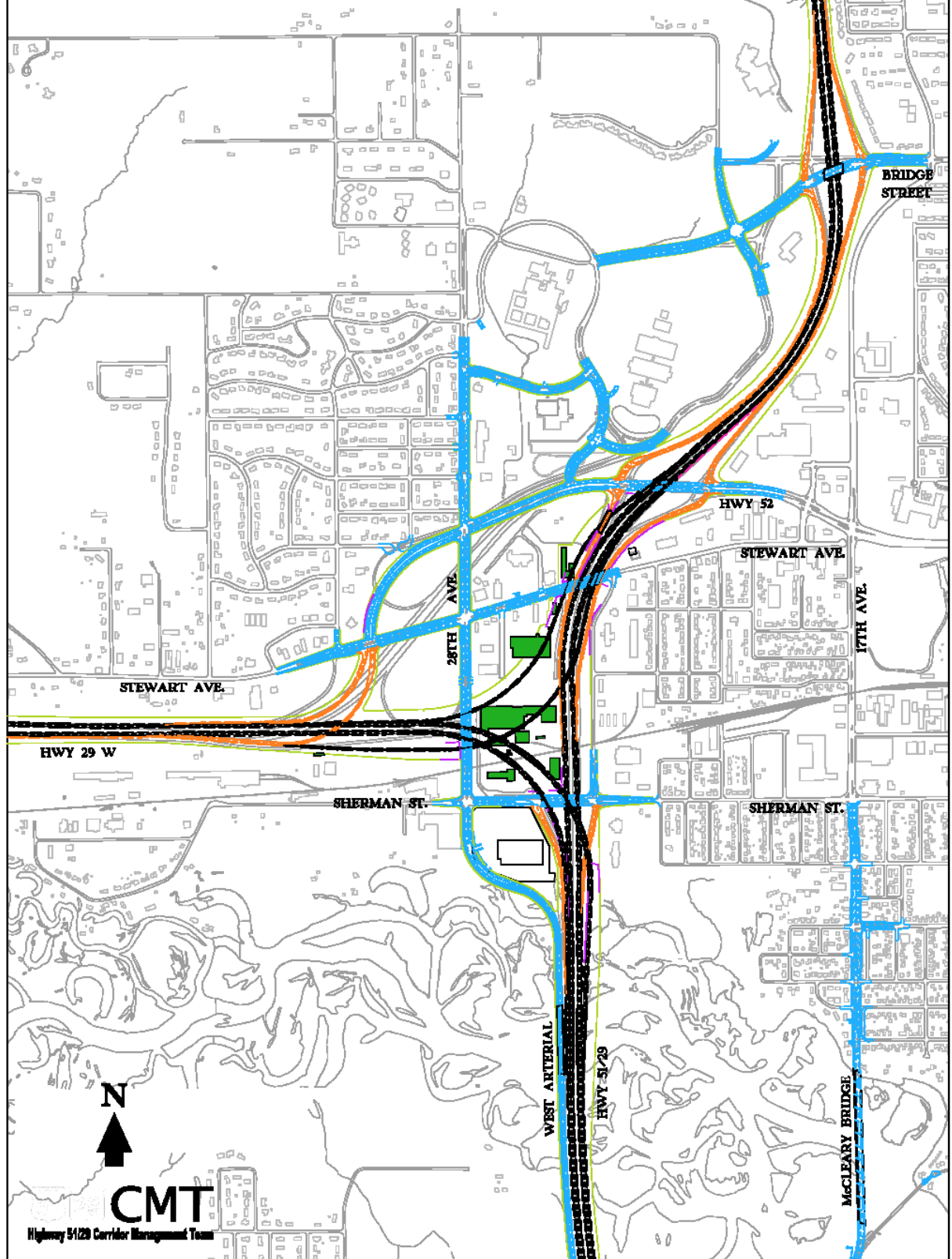
or

Bruce Ommen  
Ayres Associates  
3433 Oakwood Hills Parkway  
P.O. Box 1590  
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1590

# HWY 29 WEST INTERCHANGE

## LEGEND

- HWY 51/29
- SERVICE RAMPS & LOCAL ROADS
- RELOCATION



## PUBLIC HEARING COMMENT FORM

### WRITTEN TESTIMONY

## Public Hearing

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Marathon County**

**March 18, 2003**

**From:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Representing \_\_\_\_\_

**To:**

Mr. Doug Ross, Hwy 51/29  
Corridor Manager  
WisDOT-District 4  
1681 Second Avenue South  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI  
54495-4768



**Please check your local unit of government.**

\_\_ Town of Stettin

\_\_\_ Town of Maine

\_\_\_ City of Wausau

\_\_\_ Town of Rib Mountain

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Other not listed[illegible]

**PUBLIC HEARING COMMENT FORM  
VERBAL TESTIMONY**

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1. Please complete the form below.
2. Tear off the slip at the dotted line.
3. Proceed to the court reporter, provide the court reporter with the information below and present your statement.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Representing (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us what Municipality you live in (i.e. City of Wausau, Town of Stettin, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us what Municipality you work in (if applicable):

\_\_\_\_\_